



Managing your Medications

Did you know ?... four out of five older adults take at least one prescription medication a day

Did you know ? ... aging and new health conditions can change how medications affect you

Did you know ?... using medications incorrectly can cause health problems and a need for more medications, doctors' appointments and hospital admissions

Did you know ?... medication problems can happen easily in adults who:

- Live alone
- Take more than three medications a day
- Have more than one health care provider prescribing medications
- Have memory or vision problems
- Have difficulty paying for their prescriptions

Did you know ?... medication misuse and abuse can lead to falls

Did you know ?... side effects can occur hours, days or weeks after starting a medication

Did you know ?... common medication side effects include:

- Dizziness, drowsiness, confusion
- Dry mouth
- Racing or irregular heartbeat
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Upset stomach
- Any other unexplained health symptom

Did you know ?... older adults who use four or more prescription medications daily are at increased risk of falls because of medication interactions

Did you know ?... medications known to cause falls in older adults include:

- Tranquilizers
(used for sleep, anxiety or muscle spasms)
- Antidepressants
(used for depression, sleep or chronic pain)
- Antihypertensives
(used to control blood pressure or heart rate)
- Diuretics
(used for water retention, high blood pressure or congestive heart failure)
- Medications for pain, sleep, anxiety and stress
(often related to falls because of side effects)

What You Can Do

Medication Safety Rules

- Keep a current, dated list of ALL medications with you at all times
- Follow your doctor's instructions for taking your medicines
- Read and keep a copy of your prescription information for reference
- Create a system and regular routine for taking your medications

Talking with Your Doctor

- Provide a complete medical history to your healthcare providers
- Provide a complete list of medications, including over-the counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements and herbal remedies
- Tell your healthcare provider how you usually use your medications
- Prepare for appointments by writing a list of problems and concerns
- Discuss your concerns about medication costs – never assume that your doctor knows your medication costs !
- When you receive a new prescription, ask what it is for and what side effects to expect
- Take notes – we only remember 25% of what we hear

Your Pharmacist – get all of your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. This allows your pharmacist to identify potentially dangerous drug interactions.

Think Teamwork – healthcare providers (doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, hospital staff) your pharmacist and pharmacy staff and YOU !